

# Reaching Beyond the Surface with SisterLove

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This summer, I worked with SisterLove International as a Policy and Advocacy intern. SisterLove is a global organization, based in Atlanta, Georgia, that focuses on eradicating the impacts of HIV and sexual oppression on women, especially Black women. My role as a Policy and Advocacy intern surrounded supporting the Policy, Advocacy, and Mobilization Program through writing statements, conducting research, and developing strategic plans. As a political science and Africana studies

major, I was inspired to explore an option for my future career. SisterLove allowed me a valuable opportunity to inquire about what a future at a non-profit could look like. My experience as an intern at SisterLove has been monumental in my further education about HIV and sexual oppression and allowed me to dive deeply into subjects I had only previously scratched the surface with.

Before my internship with SisterLove, my knowledge of HIV and people living with HIV was severely limited. Much of my understanding was colored by ignorance. However, SisterLove's focus on fostering advocacy through transparency and education allowed me to become increasingly knowledgeable. Every task and assignment during my time with SisterLove was an opportunity to learn and grow. Each meeting I attended included grassroots advocates and offered rich knowledge of sexual oppression and advocacy. All the statements I wrote allowed for detailed and extensive research into current news. Overall, my experiences with SisterLove encapsulate their ability to immerse interns into their current programming and community for a transformative learning opportunity.

Most valuable during my time with SisterLove was the ability to dive deeply into a topic and present my findings at the end of the summer. I was able to determine what interested me and have direction on what information I researched and presented. Intrigued by what motherhood looks like in prison, I researched maternal care for incarcerated people. Being able to choose my research topic allowed for my genuine passion for my chosen topic to grow. I was able to reach beyond the surface level because I was driven by investment in incarcerated pregnancy and motherhood. By the end of the summer, I felt that I had done considerable research and yet there was so much more to learn. Ultimately, my initial research on this topic this summer has bred further concern and curiosity beyond SisterLove. My internship with SisterLove has inspired me to continue working with Reproductive Justice focused organizations and continue my advocacy for incarcerated pregnant and postpartum people.